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ABSTRACT

Reactions of 10 University of Florida faculty members to a proposed certificate program for international service and career development, as well as descriptive information on the program, are presented. The program covers the following areas: foreign dimensions of international careers; living and working abroad as an American citizen; employment opportunities and consulting patterns in professional fields; teaching in an international setting; and patterns of international study at the high school, undergraduate, and graduate levels. A major objective of the basic course is to develop a sensitivity to and respect for non-American cultural and institutional patterns. A survey of colleagues revealed that all interviewees liked the idea of adding a practical international career dimension to existing professional programs. Several respondents recognized that the main theme of the basic course was living and working in foreign settings, and the majority recognized the course as a supplement to specialization in a professional or liberal arts field. Finally, all respondents favored a foreign sojourn. Appended materials include a course outline and a list of program purposes, certificate requirements, core courses, and other core options. (SW)

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Program for International Service and Career Development: Reactions from University Specialists

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By

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America's new awareness that it must understand the rest of the world if it is to prosper led us to conceive the project which follows; it was nurtured in a large and growing state university where faculty and student participation in international arenas is encouraged. As College of Education faculty members with training and experience in social science and international studies, we wondered what we could do that would help students understand what it means to live and work abroad. This paper explains our proposal and the reception it received in its formative stages.

We tried to keep our motives as professional as possible. The task was undertaken as a challenge, as a worthy end in itself, and not because it was fundable or because it might appeal to some administrator's pet interest. The result was (1) project rationale, (2) a basic course, and (3) a certificate program option, the details of which are set forth in Appendix A.

All of us have pet projects. We set out to design ours so that faculty members outside our college could support it as well, for interest on their part could help generate some of the needed students. More important, the need we saw was university-wide and our college was only one of many possible sites where such an effort could be mounted. A better mousetrap was needed if the legitimacy of our effort were not to be challenged. We were quite comfortable with the highly interdisciplinary nature of our project, for we

brought advanced degrees in Latin American Affairs and Geography, as well as undergraduate degrees in Economics and History with our doctorates in Education.

These are economically trying times for many students. Concern for careers is not new, but what is is a course which explains what it is like to have one in a foreign setting. Our basic course is designed to offer intrinsically valuable guidance; however, our longer certificate program promises to provide a credential which the student may offer as additional evidence of expertise which may give him a competitive edge in obtaining international employment.

Like most certificate programs at the University of Florida, ours sets additional standards. Besides the basic three-semester-hour course, it requires a foreign sojourn which is intellectually reflected upon in written form, a study of a foreign language, at least one foreign area course, two or more core courses with international application implications, and the remainder in approved courses of international content. In effect, a student must complete fifteen credits not counting the foreign language requirement. Since students may have already earned credits in some of these areas, the certificate is an enticement to complete additional study in this field.

REACTIONS FROM COLLEAGUES:

From the conceptualization sketched above we set out to get reactions from ten faculty members who have professional or vested interests in what we are attempting to do. We also obtained the blessing of the College of Education's dean and its International Committee, although their support did not play an important role in our subsequent survey. The principal purpose of this paper is to inform the reader of how we conceived our project and how interested colleagues, mostly in other colleges, reacted to it. We hope that it may prove useful to others with similar concerns.

In our interviews we asked faculty to react to our proposal, to tell us what their experience had been, and to suggest what they might have done differently. We also asked them to specify courses in their college that would be right for our core and indicate whether or not they would be willing to give a guest lecture in our basic course. The number of our interviews was limited by the deadline for this report.

What were the reactions to the basic course?

All interviewees like the idea of adding a practical international career dimension to existing professional programs. We originally intended our basic course to appeal to advanced undergraduates and graduates who were well into their major field. However, we were soon persuaded that the basic course should focus on students who were just entering a career pattern, especially sophomores and juniors. Also, our course is elective and the fact that a low-numbered course costs the student less per credit hour may enhance its appeal.

One careers specialist and one area studies coordinator saw the course as invaluable to majors in applied fields such as agriculture, business, engineering and building construction. We were interested to discover that one general (not international) careers course was so popular that it was unable to meet student demand, while a short, minicourse about international career placement had more students than it could handle.

While our basic course is quite eclectic in its approach to the international scene, several respondents emphasized, as we do, that its main theme is living and working in foreign settings. All but one respondent correctly understood our course as only a supplement to specialization in a professional (or liberal arts) field; all of the area specialists seemed to agree that their programs could be strengthened by increased attention to lifestyle and employment patterns abroad.

Two respondents expressed intitial doubts about whether the basic course would contain enough academic substance. In part this grew out of a concern that the student might not acquire a strong enough background in the particular geographical region where he expected to work; also related to this was how a single course might integrate students with a wide range of foreign area interests without reducing the subject to a series of gross overgeneralizations. We admitted that mixed groups did make topic targeting more difficult, but they seemed to be part of the price that had to be paid if such a course were to be offered at all. More positively, however, the mixed-region difficulty could be overcome by (1) using a wide range of highly specific examples, (2) grouping students by interest whenever possible, and (3) insisting that individual research be required and target it to actual or anticipated need, both geographical and vocational. We also felt that many of our prospective students would be uncommitted to a single world region and would see themselves principally as practitioners of a particular professional skill with an eye to its application in various parts of the world.

In addition to its attention to career lifestyles, a portion of our basic course deals with foreign study programs and foreign institutions, particularly schools, foundations and corporations. Besides this, we hope to be useful to students who intend to, or who may have had, short programs abroad under American sponsorship--experiences for which they have had little or no preparation, but which our program may serve as a useful complement. Moreover, overseas experiences often stimulate international career interests, while the study of foreign education fosters fuller appreciation of the cultural perspectives

and social structures foreigners bring to the workplace. Our basic course also examines foreign-related opportunities in the U.S., especially those where important interface job possibilities for dealing with tourists, businessmen, and students exist.

We were surprised when several respondents reacted to all this with the view that the generalizable qualities of the basic course rather than its wealth of detail about international career contexts was what would be most lasting. For us, the basic course must develop a sensitivity to and respect for non-American patterns, both cultural and institutional. Yet at bottom, our aim is instrumental, not sentimental. We are interested in providing Americans with the practical data and helpful insights that will enable them to achieve their particular purposes more effectively in foreign settings.

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM:

Not all respondents liked the basic requirements of our certificate. All favored a foreign sojourn and felt that a foreign language requirement was at least politic; however, though one emphasized that foreign language was absolutely central, two felt it was not necessary at all. The two who judged it unnecessary were least involved professionally in the study of foreign cultures; at the same time, it had been their experience that employers would provide whatever language training was needed once the employee had been hired. This is a division of opinion which appears to be linked to the fact that more than half of our interviewees saw the international careers certificate as offering an important competitive edge to a prospective job applicant while most of the remainder regarded it merely as an attractive and helpful supplement to someone who already possesses strong technical qualifications. In the former instance, the guidance function of the course is preeminent; in the latter, factual

material about foreign careers is of greater value. Our certificate seeks to adapt to both needs.

One area studies respondent who favored the basic course was concerned that the proposed certificate might compete with the area studies program he represented. Other area studies specialists, on the other hand, saw it as a welcome complement, as did others from the more vocationally-oriented disciplines.

A few of the respondents identified additional benefits of the certificate. One was its potential for drawing together, possibly in the form of an advisory panel, a group of faculty interested in making Americans more effective in international arenas. Such activity should generate dialogue and collaboration among colleagues with mutual interests. An additional benefit might also emerge from this collaboration. At present, there is a certain tendency to duplicate course offerings on international themes. For example, we identified at least five different courses about international development, each in a different department. Such offerings might become more viable if several departments offered a single interdepartmental course. Even worse, no courses exist in some areas, international tourism being one example, even though the topic lends itself well to multidepartmental sponsorship. Thus, the nucleus of interest created by a certificate should add impetus to this process.

Our project illustrates the rich potential that higher education holds for making itself responsive to America's international needs. Hopefully, our report, and its appendix will provide a useful point of departure for those with similar interests.

APPENDIX A

PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL SERVICE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

By

R. R. RENNER and LOUISE ROTHMAN

College of Education

I. Introduction

The White Paper produced in 1981 by the Conference on Expanding International Dimensions reflects the views of a dozen colleges and administrative units at the University of Florida. In response to the White Paper, the following proposal was developed in order to provide a resource to students who are interested in programs with an international dimension. With the increasing professional participation of American students and faculty all over the world, there is growing need to train them to function more effectively in international settings. The following proposal illustrates how these objectives might be carried out at the University of Florida.

II. Program Purposes:

A. To train Americans to function in international settings pertinent to their field of specialization.

B. To focus attention upon practical knowledge about foreign cultures and institutions.

C. To increase the amount of destination-specific background preparation that students take to their overseas experiences.

D. To enhance student interest in the efforts of the Center for International Studies and Programs, the area studies centers, and various college programs related to international career development.

E. To work with existing programs to attract internationally-oriented U.S. and foreign sponsors interested in developing practical training programs with an interdisciplinary focus.

F. To create a focus for the research and dissemination of substantive knowledge about international communities and contexts where career opportunities exist.

G. To establish an interdisciplinary core of faculty and students concerned with the applied aspects of internationally-oriented study.

H. To focus attention on opportunities for service in the world beyond U.S. national boundaries and to actively study the impact of the rest of the world upon career opportunities in the U.S.

I. To study U.S., International, and foreign institutions which have an impact on opportunities for international employment.

J. To make Florida more aware of its essential interdependence with the rest of the world.

III. Curriculum:

A. Certificate Requirement:

1. Basic Course: EDF 3752 International Careers, Teaching, and Study.

   Course Description: A survey of institutions, issues and problems which impact on successful international career development. (3 semester credits)

2. Overseas education and/or training internship. (This requires a foreign experience validated by a follow-up report, a foreign field experience, or equivalent.)

3. A prerequisite of 10 semester credits of university foreign language, or evidence of equivalent foreign language mastery.

4. One area studies course chosen from the core list.

5. A total of 15 semester credits, including the Basic Course, two or more three-credit courses from the Core (below), and the remainder from the list of approved Program Electives. It is the student's responsibility to comply with any existing prerequisites.

B. Core Courses:

Faculty in other colleges were asked to identify suitable core courses from their existing offerings compatible with the program's objectives. The list below is subject to future additions.

1. Area Studies Options

LAS 2001	Introduction to Latin America
HUM 2410	Asian Humanities
ANT 3365	Middle East Societies
AFS 2002	The African Experience
or	
HUM 2420	African Humanities
XXX	A course in Contemporary European Culture approved by program staff.

2. Other Core Options

EDF 4710	Comparative Education
ECS 4003	Comparative Economic Systems
or	
GEB 5795	International Business

2. Other Core Options (continued)

LIN 6416/
TSL 6371 Materials and Techniques in Teaching English as a Second Language
CPO 2002 Comparative Politics
or
PUP 2012 Comparative Public Policies
MMC 4301 World Communications Systems
or
MMC 6303 International Communication I
ANT 2451 Racial and Cultural Minorities
ANT 5255 Rural Peoples in the Modern World
EDF/BUS
3935a International Tourism (proposed)
EDF 3935b Foreign Destination Research Seminar (for Americans planning to study, visit, or reside at specific foreign destinations)
EDF 3935c Variable Topics Seminar

B. Approved Program Electives

Because of the large number of possibilities, specific courses are not listed. They include courses of international content which have been approved by the certificate program advisor.

C. Affiliated Service Course:

EDF 3935d American Education for Foreign Students (Emphasis on orientation to U.S. education and culture with special attention to higher education)

OUTLINE

EDF 3752 International Careers, Teaching and Study

A. International Careers:

1. Foreign dimensions of international careers:
   a. Employment patterns and business techniques
   b. Educational patterns
   c. Employee training and personnel policies
   d. Foreign foundations and their role in sponsoring exchanges of U.S. nationals.

2. Living and working abroad as an American citizen: cultural, social, and economic differences.

3. Employment opportunities:
   a. Multi-national corporations
   b. U.S. Government Agencies
   c. Tourism
   d. International agencies and foundations
   e. International and bicultural schools abroad
   f. Military

4. Consulting patterns in professional fields

B. Teaching in an international setting:

1. United States schools abroad
2. Foreign schools
3. International schools and universities
4. United States agency and foundation - sponsored teaching
5. Teaching English as a second language

C. Patterns of International Study:

1. Undergraduate:
   a. Junior year abroad programs
   b. Study tours
   c. Work tours
   d. University sponsored and/or exchange programs (Fulbright, Rhodes, British Council)
   e. Florida University System programs

2. Graduate:
   a. Agencies and university programs that fund and support studies abroad.
      1. East-West Center
      2. Institutes for foreign areas study
      3. Asia Society, N.Y.
      4. Organization of American States

3. High School:
   a. American Field Service
   b. Rotary International
   c. Sister City exchange programs

4. Intensive Language Study

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